

Date: September 24, 2003

To: FCC

From: Devaney & Associates, Inc.
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RE: Comments to Docket 03-123

Devaney & Associates is a full-service advertising, marketing and public relations firm. We have been working with state relay service since 1997 and have more experience marketing relay services than any other agency in the United States. To date, we have worked with nine different states (Maryland, Virginia, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Oregon, California, Arizona and Texas). We respectfully submit the following comments regarding TRS outreach.

There is no question that a national advertising campaign would be beneficial to all state TRS programs. There seems to be many questions on who should lead this effort and who should fund it. We have several ideas that do not place the burden completely on the FCC.

1. Matching Funds: We support the suggestion made by several state relay services (specifically Nevada) that the FCC match state-funded outreach efforts. As we all agree, individual state outreach efforts benefit both intrastate and interstate relay users, so it would seem reasonable for the FCC to match the efforts of these individual states. This will also serve as a reward of sorts for states that already conduct outreach and an incentive for other states to do the same. And, ultimately, this increased funding will help Relay users and the general public alike, which is the most important of goals.

2. Consistent Message: We know that many people are looking to the FCC to create and fund a national outreach campaign. Such a broad campaign is important to create a consistent message but is expensive and difficult to execute fairly. But creating a consistent message for each state relay to use would be within the scope of the FCC order. By producing high-quality campaign materials (television ads, radio ads, print ads, posters, brochures, etc.) that each state could customize for a small fee, you would give states some of the tools needed to pursue outreach with their own means. This would not only reduce the financial and logistical burden on the FCC of managing an actual national campaign, but it would also allow states to benefit from materials that are consistent from state-to-state. Again, these materials would provide a consistent message across the country to Relay users and the general public alike, which would have positive impact interstate relay users.

3. Educate the Children: Eliminate the future need for outreach by introducing relay to children in elementary school like is done for 9-1-1. In twenty years there will be no need for a national outreach campaign if all children learn about relay in school. While some states are pursuing this individually (such as Maryland and Montana), this should be a national initiative.

If needed, we would be happy to provide sample materials for the items mentioned and additional outreach items that have been found successful for state TRS programs.